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Michigan House Transportation Committee Hearing on 12-5-12

Mike Zelle, President of The Disability Network, Flint, Michigan

Thank you for the opportunity to testify to the Committee

I am here to support Representative Jim Ananich's HB 5536 to amend the Michigan Vehicle Code to increase the civil fine for parking in a space reserved for a disabled person to a minimum of \$200 and a maximum of \$500.

The Disability Network is an organization that serves over 13,000 people each year. At a recent town hall meeting we organized in Flint, the number one issue presented as a priority was the lack of handicap parking enforcement.

Increasing fees for violations is one positive step to solve this issue. On behalf of the 1.9 million Michigan citizens with disabilities (US Census), I strongly encourage your support of HB 5536.

I also encourage you to find additional ways to educate our public on the need for accessible parking for citizens with disabilities. This is a matter of respecting laws we have established in our society to accommodate citizens with disabilities and allow them access to their everyday living needs. For most people, it is a matter of education or for some, it is just plain laziness.

We have developed a culture of respect in the City of Lansing for pedestrian rights and parking enforcement. The primary reason is that there is attention and a focus on enforcement. The increased fines created with HB 5536 will help with enforcement of accessible parking across our state. Passage of this amendment will also help educate our citizens that the right of access is important to our society and citizens with disabilities in the great state of Michigan.

Thank you, Mike Zelle

